**Chapter Eighty-Four**

The order had gone out for everyone to pull back, the appearance of *multiple* Alpha Grimm causing Goodwitch to prompt them to retreat behind an extra layer of defenses, but Raye, along with his team of Beacon Sophomores, could only watch as the near-*suicidal* freshman teams, along with the visiting team from Mistral, didn’t return to the safety of their walls like ordered.

No, the three teams had grouped up, blasts of rainbow fire, pink grenades, and another couple flashes of black giving them breathing room, but, while they were staring at the *two approaching Alpha Minos*, they weren’t drawing back, despite now having the space to easily retreat.

Instead, the lizard Faunus was calling someone, Scroll out, and looking to the left a little, Raye saw that the white-haired girl still on the wall, standing next to the last member of the Mistralian Sophomore team, was talking on hers too.

Raye couldn’t hear what was being said, as they were both looking in the wrong direction to read their lips, but she nodded, and said something to the archer who stood beside her. A flash of Dustcasting later, she was wearing a breastplate of ice, but one with an odd number of hooks on it, too curved to be anti-Grimm spikes.

A moment later, their use was revealed as beside, Raye’s team on the next level up, a few white glyphs formed, and boxes of ammo were flung into the air, flying directly at the pair. The white-haired girl started catching those launched ammo crates and hung their straps off her armor’s hooks, making another breastplate on the archer, who started doing the same.

*“Hey!”* Raye yelled down at them, knowing they *could* hear him, especially with barely anyone fighting at this sector’s wall. *“We need to pull back!”* But she ignored him. *“I SAID HEY!”*

The girl glanced his way, shook her head dismissively, and motioned for the archer to come to her. Before Raye could say more, the other man had jogged over, and stood behind the girl, putting both hands on her shoulders.

With a wave, a row of glowing white glyphs appeared under their feet, lifting them up over the edge of the parapets, more forming in the air like a ramp, and the two were fired off, like from a cannon, *directly* towards the waiting group.

The Faunus flew into the air, catching them both and flapping his wings to slow them, as the Alpha Minos got closer and closer, if anything seeming *angered* by the fact that they were being ignored, giving out twin bellows that threatened to turn Raye’s knees to water at the thought of having to hold them off until the teachers could arrive.

The three teams on the field, however, didn’t seem to care.

Well, the katana-woman shot the Alphas a worried look, and the shirtless man did too, even though he tried to hide it, but the rest didn’t even *react*.

Focusing on the *sane* students still on the wall, he waved the others up again, as they ran across the bridges, crossing the ‘moat’. He had to yell to keep them moving, as they stopped and looked over to see what was going on in the Sectors *next* to them, the defenders for each fighting hard, most of the Tide moving past Professor Tim, and Coco’s team.

In their sector, however, the Faunus seemed to be giving some kind of *speech,* the others around him nodding, before, with a grin, he turned away, and flew *right for one of the Alphas.*

Blowing out another gout of rainbow fire, the rest of his team followed behind him, while the white-haired Dustcaster did. . . *something,* a large white circle of runes spreading out several dozen feet, before walls rose up, carrying those around her upwards, creating a tower of blue-white ice in seconds, fifty feet high, with a wide spiral staircase around the outside edge, the incoming Tide of Grimm crashing against it, and scrabbling over each other to start to climb up the pathway, to get to the defenders inside.

As impressive a display of Dustcasting as it was, Raye thought inscribing *snowflake designs* into the entire thing was a bit much.

The Sophomore team took positions on top, firing downwards, the knight moving to stand on the stairs, to hold off the attackers, while the other freshman team leapt off the top, giving up their newly created defensive advantage, and heading for the *other* Alpha.

Because *why not?*

The lizard Faunus hit the first Alpha, a wave of flame that caused the giant Minos to bellow in pain, swiping at him, the freshman bringing up his shield to take the blow as he was thrown backwards several dozen feet from the force of the strike alone, wings flaring to slow himself.

As the Grimm started to move forward towards the Faunus, a yellow blur slammed into it, the brawler grabbing hold of its mask and sinking explosive punches into the Alpha’s eyes, trying to blind it, but it took nearly a dozen blows before she shattered even one red glowing orb, the creature having three per side, and she had to leap away to avoid one large, bony hand that slammed into the creature’s own head in an attempt to crush her.

Another wash of rainbow fire caused it to stumble, flailing, the dark-haired girl swinging in, twirling her kusarigama in tight to sink it deep into another of the creature’s eyes, destroying it, but the Grimm moved *fast,* bringing up a hand to grab the ribbon and *pull*, yanking the girl in towards it. She was reeled in, a car-sized fist swinging at her, ready to crush the girl, but she blurred, her after-image coming apart under the blow, while the brunette arced upwards, her weapon still caught in its grip.

The blonde girl came in, slamming an explosive punch to the inside of the Grimm’s wrist holding the ribbon, causing the Minos’ grip to loosen. The puncher blasted away before the spiked hoof of the monster’s kick could strike her, while the dark-haired girl, with a twist and pull, freed her weapon and got away as well.

Meanwhile, with the *other* Alpha, the scythe-wielder had tried a spin-cut, only to get her weapon stuck in the Alpha’s armor, yanking it out turning to petals just in time to avoid its counter-attack, the hammer girl bouncing up and hitting the same spot as the first girl, cracking the armor a bit more, but not *nearly* enough to do any real damage, barely leaping away as it tried to respond.

The giant minotaur started to charge, but a huge spike of ice shot from the ground, which it slammed head-first into, not even cracking its mask, but the blow stopped its charge, leaving it to stumble for a moment as a gray form slipped around its feet, sinking two large, fang-like daggers into the back of one of its legs, ripping them free in a gout of dark smoke.

The Alpha *roared*, flailing, striking the monochrome freshman, who put his hand out, and, in a flash of pink was thrown backwards, unharmed. Raye frowned, because that kind of Aura manipulation, to have a shield without *having a shield*, was something *none* of them could do, but this freshie was able to pull it off against a surprise attack? Whoever the kid was, he wasn’t as flashy as the rest of his team, but he was *just* as good, as he landed on a Beowulf, who looked up, visibly confused, before the boy absently sunk a blade into the creature’s brain through its eye, and leapt forward, charging the Minos once more.

Back with the *second* Alpha, and *how bad was it that that was a thing,* Nikos had closed, and, pulling *another* Ice Dust embedded dagger from her pack, levelled it, the weapon glowing black before it vanished with a muted *boom.*

The Minos was blasted backwards half a dozen feet, as Mell, beside Raye, swore, *“By the Brothers!”* The creature’s armor cracked, a circular section filled with glittering, frosted metal indented in its chest, but it roared, starting to charge her, the lizard coming from the side. With sword covered with rainbow fire, he dove under its head to stab into the Grimm’s chin, the flames exploding outwards to cover the underside of its jaw, the Faunus trying to fly away, but he was clipped by the Minos’ arm. The kid was sent flying into the masses of Grimm moving around their fight, who dispersed into dark smoke as the Faunus glowed blue-gold, Aura taking enough damage that it became *visible*, but not breaking.

The Alpha clawed at the flames, trying to pull them away, but the rainbow fire was almost liquid, pulled back to it like water running downhill, until the creature roared and turned to the nearby Grimm, those that were giving the fighters a wide berth, grabbing an Ursa *Major* and slamming the spike-backed bear, belly-first, into the flames.

The *comparatively* smaller Grimm screamed in pain, spasming before going still, and when the Alpha threw away the corpse, the bottom of the Ursa had been hollowed out, but there was no sign of the rainbow flame left. However, the damage was clear, the bone of the Alpha’s mask having been worn away to the point that black flesh could be seen, bits of red poking out as well.

With the second Alpha, the other freshmen team had the same idea, the scythe wielder spinning forward, on her side, to sink her weapon into the Minos’ chin, barely driving it in, having to fire the weapon to rip it free, dodging out of the way as the hammer girl went after its knees, causing it to stumble, only for ice to spring up from a hidden glyph as it was stepped on, encasing one of the creature’s tree-sized legs. The Alpha was strong enough to rip itself free, but that took *time*, time enough for the grey boy to go after the back of its *other* leg, causing its footing to get more and more unsteady, even though there wasn’t *really* a hamstring for the boy to cut.

They repeated this, hammering away at that one spot under its chin, again and again, the Minos *trying* to stop them, predicting the attack with the intelligence that made Alphas *really* dangerous, but with the girl able to break apart into petals, and come screaming in from any direction, it couldn’t grab her, and if it tried to pull its arms in to turtle up the orange-haired girl would start hammering on its knees and ribs with impunity.

Back with the *first* Alpha, it’d pulled its chin down, charging the Faunus, who ran, the attacks from the blonde and brunettes doing damage, but not slowing it down that much. Flying past Nikos, he shouted something and spat a fireball, which she caught on her spear, pulling another ice dagger and firing it at the charging Alpha’s leg as it passed by, giving the boy time to get away.

On her spear, the rainbow fire seemed to grow more and more intense, spreading out to cover the head of the weapon, until it started casting dancing shadows, unnaturally lighting up the now overcast day, the Grimm in *every* direction slowing to stare at it, the Alpha Minos turning to focus on her, almost seeming to hesitate.

The second Minos glanced over as well, pausing, which was the opening that freshman team needed. Ice shot up, covering the Alpha’s bottom half, as the freshman gathered, the hammer girl and scythe girl nodding to each other, *exchanging* *weapons,* shocking Raye, as that was *not done.*

The monochrome boy suddenly regained color, reaching into a pocket and pulling out a golden crystal, activating the Electricity Dust and turning to. . . *attack* the ex-hammer girl with long, thick bolts of lightning?

*What the hell?*

But instead of crying out in pain, the ginger girl threw her fists up and *laughed*, the yellow energy turning the same bright pink as what she’d trailed before, *obviously* some kind of Semblance at play, as she started to shine just as much as Nikos’ spear was.

The cloaked girl blurred forward, twirling the hammer, spinning it up, firing it to gain speed, before slamming it into the Minos’ chin, forcing its head up with a *crack* that finally shattered the armor there, turning to pedals and pulling back, as the boy of their team leapt away from the now-electrified girl, to land next to their *main* Dustcaster.

There was the sound of a **thunderclap**, and the girl was *gone,* the ground around her exploding from the force, a long arc of pink lightning directing Raye’s gaze as it went forward, and up, passing *through* the Alpha’s head, which was now split *completely* in half, petering out half a mile away, where he could distantly see the ginger girl starting to fall, twirling the weapon about to ride the scythe back to her friends.

Looking back to the *First* Alpha, the fight there was coming to a head as well, *that* Minos keeping its now weakened point covered as it started to charge Nikos, the punchy girl coming up, hair glowing gold with fire, and slammed a blow into the Alpha’s chest, only slowing it, blasting up and away from the Grimm’s grasping hands, the dark-haired girl coming in and throwing her weapon under the Minos’ horns.

It was caught by the lizard, who took the weapon down and behind the charging Grimm, trying to drag the creature’s head back, the brunette holding the other end of her ribbon and trying to do the same, but they struggled, able to stall its charge, but unable to budge its head.

That is, until the blonde girl dropped down between them, grasping each end of the ribbon with one gauntleted hand, the flames of her hair bursting into a radiant inferno, and, yelling, all three were able to *overpower the Alpha*, forcing its head back, and make it gaze at the cloud-covered sky, Nikos charging in with her glowing spear, stopping *right* in front of the thirty-foot tall Minos, her weapon covered with impenetrable darkness which only made the flames on its tip seem all the brighter, and, with a sound just like the other girl’s attack, *launched it.*

And the Alpha *died.*

The weapon was gone in a moment, a trail of rainbow sparks creating a blazing line, up through the now exposed flesh of the Alpha Minos’ chin, through a no longer existent head, and up into the sky, the front half of the Grimm’s head *gone* as its body was pulled backwards, *hard,* almost landing on the rest of the team, but the Faunus and blonde both turned, as one, and struck out with two punches into its back that shoved it to the side, while the Grimm all around both freshman teams paused, then tried to charge them, but were cut down as both groups still had energy to fight, and common Grimm seemed to almost not matter to them at all.

The Faunus called something out, and both teams fled back to the ice tower, taking up defensive positions, reloading, and firing down at the Tide. Both teams except for the Faunus and Nikos who waited, the girl’s spear flying back down from the sky to her waiting hand. They seemed to argue about something, the Faunus frowning, as Nikos pointed up, then waved to the left then the right, indicating the other sectors.

*What, clearing this one isn’t enough?* Raye thought incredulously, *still* not believing what he was seeing, despite having *watched the entire thing*.

The Faunus nodded, pointing to the tower of ice, and Nikos nodded back, taking off in long, almost floating steps towards it, as the lizard spread his wings and took off, going higher, and higher, and Raye frowned. He’d almost say the Faunus was *running*, but the freshman’s team was still here, and he was clearly doing whatever Nikos had told him to, though, as the lizard passed through the clouds and disappeared, the Sophomore had no idea what that could be.

Looking at the others, they were just as confused as he was, and the other teams were watching in as much disbelief as Raye felt, taking potshots at the occasional Grimm that tried to get over their section of wall, but otherwise just waiting. Some Grimm poured in from other sectors, having crested *their* walls and tried to circle around through the moat, but it still wasn’t that much, at least half of the Grimm they’d have to deal with being pulled to the ice tower, and-

***A Roar Split The Sky.***

The sound shook the very air, unlike *anything* Raye had every heard before, a weight seeming to press down on him for a moment, but, despite what, logically, *had* to be some kind of Grimm, a monster that would kill them all, the sniper didn’t feel scared.

*Intimidated* sure, he didn’t know what was doing *that*, only that he *didn’t* want to fight it, but, though he didn’t know why, he felt he didn’t need to?

The entire battlefield froze for a long moment, even the Grimm staring upwards, some of them cringing back, until the feeling passed, though a light started to pierce the clouds, a rainbow glow, like a second sun, growing bright-

*. . . No.*

A moment later, the Faunus dropped down through the clouds, body *covered* in that multicolored fire of his, though it seemed. . . *more* than it had before.

Then, from around him, the clouds boiled away, four blazing *comets* of rainbow flame coming down, each as big around as the Headmaster’s tower, and half as tall, each one falling towards a different sector, the ones coming for the sectors Raye could see homing in on the Alphas still fighting, both with slightly cracked armor, but otherwise those Grimm seemed fine.

The Faunus threw his arms forward, wings flaring, and the comets shot down, no longer seeming to fall, but *accelerated*, slamming down into the Alphas in columns of rainbow fire that scoured the landscape. Professor Tim, as well as CFVY and the Atlesian girl, all leapt out of the way, though the fire seemed to part around them to a degree, raging for a moment, before starting to part, revealing that both Alpha Grimm were alive, but *heavily* burned, missing almost all their armor, ragged red flesh barely held together with thin webs of black skin.

The Alpha Beowulf tried to move, but instead of dashing about at blinding speed, it *stumbled*, as Coco and the Atlas girl both opened up on it, minigun and laser fire bearing down on the Alpha, driving it onto its back, and they *kept going* until it stopped moving.

The Alpha Ursa seemed in better shape, but still out of it, the creature’s massive bulk likely protecting it, thought it’d lost *all* of its spikes and armor it possessed except for a thin rim of white around its red eyes. The giant demon that was Professor Tim, meanwhile, cocked its enormous horned head and stabbed its blood-red sword into the rainbow fire that still covered the battlefield.

From the point his Fire Dust Flames touched the Faunus’ creation, the red spread outwards, racing outwards as it shifted, the rainbow fire seeming to paradoxically *ignite,* the heat growing until the dirt of the battlefield melted, turning to lava, Raye feeling the heat on his face like he was looking into an oven. The Professor lifted his Dustcasted construct’s head back and let out a mad malicious cackle that rang out across the battlefield, opening its hand and letting its weapons destabilize, throwing his arms forward as the rainbow fires finished converting to Fire Dust constructs.

As one, all of the deep-red flames *moved*, like one enormous living entity, converging on the Alpha Ursa, binding it in chains of crimson flame that sizzled and burnt the monster, holding it down as it bellowed in pain, the sound a physical force to Raye and the others, but the feelings of fear the sound carried were oddly blunted.

More and more chains of fire bound the creature, covering it, slowly tightening and compacting, as the Professor walked his demon construct forward, slamming flaming hands onto them, forcing the Grimm into a smaller and smaller sphere, a blood red-sun casting malevolent shadows over the battlefield, until with a ***crunch*** that rang out, the chains tightened to a single point of light, that then exploded *outwards*, overtaking every Grimm in the sector, melting everything in its path, and clearing it completely.

The fighting continued, but more screams from what *had* to be other Alphas dying could be heard, until, finally, the several hundred Grimm still visible stumbled as one, their single-minded cohesion breaking, and, for the first time in his life, Raye saw Grimm *flee.*

As the Sophomore watched the lizard Faunus, no longer covered in fire, land on the ice tower, grinning, the older boy finally understood *why* the Headmaster had taken the freshman on as his apprentice. Looking to the others, the sniper smiled, and commented, “Well, if that’s who we’d have to fight, I’m okay with not being picked for the Vytal Festival.”

<DR>

**The Sleepers Stirred**